

REPORT ON BUCKS COUNTY

NUL-UCDS Field Trips - December 12 to 20, 1951

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Note: This report is in two parts. Part I includes a statement of the assignment, the findings, conclusions and recommendations. Part II includes a brief report on each city visited, both in terms of the impact of the defense emergency and of relationship to the lower Bucks County developments.

PART I

The assignment reported on here included brief surveys of conditions affecting NUL-UCDS interests in Philadelphia, Trenton, Morrisville-Bristol, Camden, and Atlantic City. The inclusion of those cities and towns was based on information secured previously by other NUL and UCDS personnel. Such information was to be documented and supplemented as much as possible in the time allotted - Philadelphia, 3 days; Trenton, 2 days; Bristol and Camden, 1 day; Atlantic City, 1 day.

The NUL Field Services office wanted detailed information on the following items:

- 1) The actual availability of manpower from Philadelphia to Atlantic City, for work in the Fairless Works' plant and adjoining firms.
- 2) The number of persons, Negro and white, that can be expected to require housing in the area being built up by Mr. Levitt and Mr. Galbraith (of Gunnison Homes).
- 3) Whether any Negroes have attempted to purchase, lease, or rent houses built by Mr. Levitt or Mr. Galbraith.
- 4) General supporting information regarding the impact of the defense emergency on the several communities affected by the lower Bucks County industrial development.
- 5) Attitudes of officials.

The NUL Industrial Relations office wanted specialized employment data, also - as follows:

- 1) Extent of impact of defense emergency on towns affected by lower Bucks County industrial development.
- 2) Over-all and Negro employment, and unemployment.
- 3) Areas of highest employment rates.
- 4) Fields of short labor supply, and labor surplus.
- 5) Probable racial employment policy.
 - a. Known racial employment policies.
 - b. Attitude of unions.
 - c. Anticipated policy at Morrisville.

GENERAL FINDINGS

1. There is a continuing increase in the population in each of the five cities visited; and, the rate of increase of non-whites far outstrips that of the total population. Proportionately more non-whites are coming principally to Trenton, Philadelphia and Camden (in that order) than whites.

2. Job opportunities that non-whites can secure have not kept pace in terms of vertical distribution with the rate of non-white population increases.

3. In each of the five cities there has been an over-all increase in employment since the outbreak of the Korean war.

4. There has been a heavy expansion in the manufacture of durable goods in Philadelphia, Trenton and Camden, and contraction in consumer lines in all the cities visited.

5. Except in Bristol and Atlantic City, there are acute shortages of stenographers, machinists, tool and die makers, draftsmen and engineers.

6. Housing is recognized as inadequate in each of the five cities, but conceded to be much more inadequate for Negroes in terms of quantity and quality.

7. A schedule of down payments on Levitt homes advertised in the Philadelphia Inquirer (announcing the inspection and sale of Levitt homes on December 2, 1951) listed down payments at \$1,000 for non-veteran defense workers - no down payment for veteran defense workers - \$600 for veteran non-defense workers and \$1,500 for non-veteran, non-defense workers. Monthly carrying charges were listed at \$59 and \$60 for defense and non-defense workers respectively. That schedule was thought not to be one which would attract Negroes inasmuch as their chances of getting satisfactory jobs in the area are in question.

8. There is a gigantic expansion taking place in the Delaware River Valley area representing some \$1,450 million, that will create thousands and thousands of jobs.

9. There are statements coming from responsible officials and citizens in Philadelphia and Trenton, that raise serious questions regarding the attitudes and interest of officials of U. S. Steel Fairless Works and other officials of firms building homes in the area, as to fair treatment of Negroes. Future racial policies at Fairless Works and both Levitt and Gunnison Homes, are in great need of proper clarification.

10. The union which will represent the largest number of workers in lower Bucks County is expected to be the United Steelworkers. Officials of this union give strong assurance that that union and that they (the officials) themselves will do everything they can to see that there is no discrimination on account of race, creed - that Negroes will be treated fairly. Known racial policies of that union are good.

11. There is a definite interest of social agencies, civic groups and individuals in the problems and/or employment or business opportunities in lower Bucks County. At the moment there is no satisfactory coordination or focus of the interest or efforts of these groups. In so far as the social agencies' segment is concerned, some of the top-most local leadership considers it mandatory that national social agencies take the leadership.

CONCLUSION

1. Manpower will be available from all five cities reported on. This will be true particularly among unskilled and semi-skilled workers. It will not be true to any great extent in highly skilled categories - such workers will probably have to be trained by the Fairless Works or other firms needing them, or transferred from other plants. The flow of labor from as far away as Philadelphia (city), Camden and Atlantic City will also depend on availability of dwelling units and the adequacy of roads. The adequate provision of roads (not now available) for the free flow of drivers will be a particularly important factor to Philadelphians.

The attitude of U. S. Steel officials is generally understood to be that workers will come as long as there are jobs at U. S. Steel rates (going rates in the steel industry, so far). Fairless Works is said to have some eight thousand applications on file already.

Nevertheless, the conclusion, at this time, regarding availability of manpower, obviously must be hedged by such qualifications as indicated above. A similar type of conclusion can be made regarding Negro manpower. Negroes will be available, but the number will be inhibited, if not completely controlled, by the availability of dwelling units convenient to their job location. This is a problem with terrible overtones. Moreover, whatever in-plant training that is developed at the Fairless Works must include Negroes

if Negroes are going to be at all well represented in jobs above primary categories.

2. No information was uncovered on the trips reported here, which led to the identity of any Negro who had attempted to purchase, lease or rent homes built either by Mr. Levitt or Mr. Galbraith.

The schedule of down payments advertised for Levitt houses, together with much discussed allegations of intent not to sell Levitt houses to Negroes, were considered ample deterrents.

3. The industrial development taking place in the Delaware River Valley and centered in lower Bucks County has created more concern, hopes and arm-chair generalship than any development that area has known for decades. It is close to them - so close a psychiatrist stated that residents of lower Bucks County are suffering from shock. Almost \$1½ billion of new money has been poured recently into the area, or will be shortly. Communities as far south as Wilmington will feel some effect, nearer communities will gradually recognize a neighbor which will be an example of either an industrial competitive hodge-podge of free enterprise at its worst, or a shining example of the best industrial know-how and social planning our great economic system can permit - all depending on the outcome of present attitudes, efforts and decisions. Some in-between is possible, but nothing short of the shining, worthwhile example is warranted.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The National Urban League, so far, has only been shadow boxing - all agencies operating in the "Bucks County" picture have been shadow boxing - in so far as the establishment of democratic principals is concerned.

The surveyor recommends that \$75,000 (for 12 months) be secured immediately for efforts in Bucks County. This is absolutely necessary to meet the unmitigated challenge carefully placed in the face of all decent fair-minded Americans who are not afraid of straw-men, or the new, or of the equality of opportunity for all men who can measure up, regardless of race, color, creed, or national origin. Bucks County could possibly be America's last chance to build a completely typical economic-industrial part of itself from scratch, as a democracy!

Bucks County presents a ready-made opportunity for a momentous page in American history. Steel, the very bed-rock of our industrial civilization, and grand-scale building with which American genius has led the world, can at the same time grow side by side with the best that social agencies, leadership and plain human decency can produce in the way of a new community, a community encompassing the best American democratic ideals for all the world to see.

2. It is recommended, further, that the National Urban League, immediately, assume the leadership in Bucks County, in realization of the democratic community described in recommendation #1, and including the effective flow of the best skills of both whites and Negroes into the important defense industries of lower Bucks County.

3. It is recommended that United Community Defense Services and the United Defense Fund be requested to provide funds for a temporary intensive job in Bucks County, as described in #s 1 and 2; and that additional funds be requested from the Ford Foundation.

4. It is suggested that the outline supplied by UCDS for requests to it for funds for direct operations of participating national agencies, be completed (without much further investigation) from material secured on the trips reported on in this document. The same material should be well adapted for the request, for continuing funds, to the Ford Foundation.

5. The recommendations include provision for adequate staff, radio time, space in printed news media, organization of country-wide leadership and its coordinated efforts (individually and collectively), and the use of every approved tool known to the social sciences. Immediate needs are for a project director, assistant director, secretary, travel and administrative budgets. When funds are available, a public relations specialist should be added.

The National Urban League should set up the project at once. It has the know-how and the personnel to aid in its development until satisfactory funds are secured to supply the project with its own budget.

6. It is respectfully urged that the National Urban League give serious consideration to these recommendations at the earliest possible date.